The work will be published in quarterly parts. Each part will contain eight beautifully colored lithographs, with accompanying letter-press. The whole work will contain about eighty plates, and will be completed in eleven parts. The first number is announced for January, 1870.

THE GEOLOGY OF ALASKA.*—The most interesting results of Mr. Dall's explorations are the determination of the facts that west of the 105th degree of longitude the Alaskan coast is rising, that the former violence of volcanic forces is diminishing throughout the territory, and that there are no evidences of general glacial action. Mr. Dall has travelled thirteen hundred miles up the valley of the Yukon, and explored on the shores of Norton Sound, without obtaining any evidences of glacial action. The whole territory north of the Alaskan Mountains could not, therefore, have been covered by the same general sheet of ice which has scratched the section east of the Rocky Mountains.

This raises an unexpected obstacle in the path both of the hypothesis of a general terrestrial glacial sheet, and the theory of floating ice. In either case it will be difficult to explain the absence of scratches on the northern slope of the Alaskan Mountains when all the rest of North-eastern America must have been covered by ice.

If Alaska was covered by the waters of the Pacific, why did not the floating icebergs score the surface, and if it was out of water during the glacial epoch, why did not the great terrestrial glacier of the east have its counterpart in the Arctic valley of the Yukon?

NATURAL HISTORY MISCELLANY.

BOTANY.

SPONTANEOUS MOTION OF PROTOPLASM.—Professor J. B. Schnetzler records in the "Archives des Sciences Physiques et Naturelles," some observations on the spontaneous motion of the protoplasm in the cells of the leaves of the common water weed, *Anacharis alsinastrum*. The writer remarks that whether the cause of the motion is found, as some have maintained, in the successive contractions or vibrations of the exterior layer of the protoplasm, which transmit themselves to the interior layers; or whether the successive displacements of the molecules is produced by causes purely mechanical, as others have held, it still remains to be explained what produces these contractions or displacements. It is incontestable that they are found only in living protoplasm. Professor Schnetzler believes that the principal cause which provokes the motion

* Observations on the Geology of Alaska, by W. H. Dall, 8vo, pamph., 12 pp. From the Alaska Coast Pilot, published by the Coast Survey.